

File - Fam Serv. Bn.

COUNCIL OF SOCIAL AGENCIES
45 Branford Place
Newark, N. J.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S AGENCY REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT ON FAMILY SERVICE BUREAU

March 19, 1964

I. INTRODUCTION:

The Family and Children's Agency Review Subcommittee is grateful to the officers, the members of the board of the Family Service Bureau serving on the committee, to its Executive Director and to its Director of Casework Services for their help and co-operation in the agency review procedure. The subcommittee wishes to express its appreciation to this agency for having volunteered to be the first agency to be reviewed. In the process, the subcommittee has learned much, not only about the F.S.B., but also about the special tasks to which it has been assigned.

II. DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

The Family Service Bureau of Newark offers casework and counseling service to residents or persons employed in the Newark, Belleville, Irvington and West Hudson area. In most cases, only a single individual is involved but occasionally other family members, either adults or teenagers are included. Almost all interviews are held in the office.

The major focus of the agency's service is professional counseling to motivated clients in relation to emotional and psychological problems. Many of these cases involve marriage problems. The service tends to exhibit a clinical approach.

Physically the agency headquarters are located in an attractive, centrally located building, recently remodeled for the immediate purpose it serves. There is one branch in Belleville.

B. TYPE OF CLIENTELE AND SERVICES RENDERED

The subcommittee has been impressed with the effectiveness of the work of the Family Service Bureau in its special field of competence. However, in agreement with the recommendations of the F.S.A.A. study of 1963, the subcommittee believes that the present scope of service of the F.S.B. is too limited. It is felt that much stronger efforts must be made to reach a larger cross-section of the community - especially that socially disadvantaged segment which, as was evinced by the Hayes Homes experiment, is in most acute need of family services. By serving only the self-motivated client, the agency is not fulfilling its complete function as the central, non-sectarian counseling agency in our urban community setting.

Whereas the agency suggests that such an extension of service could only be accomplished with a substantial increase in funds, the subcommittee feels that a shift from the heavy emphasis upon family casework with "self-motivated" clients can be accomplished by adopting one or more of the following suggestions:

- 1) The subcommittee is convinced that large segments of the community described by the agency as needing but not wanting to accept counseling service can be reached and served. This will take new approaches and new techniques. Cooperative efforts with other agencies, including group work agencies, may be helpful.
- 2) The subcommittee suggests that the F.S.B. take stock of the several major problem areas in the community. Among these are the problems of aging, juvenile delinquency and the need for extensive family life education. The agency may want to select one or two of these areas and begin by concentrating on these. Some support for such new projects may derive from shifting program, but important additional support must be sought from sponsoring organizations, foundations and government. In certain areas of work, there may be great value in making use of volunteers.
- 3) An enlargement of the Board (discussed below) may well be of assistance in broadening the source of referrals for the agency.
- 4) It was suggested by the Family Service Bureau that hard to reach clients may be more easily attracted to an office in the neighborhood. In this connection, utilizing facilities of existing agencies might prove expedient and involve only slight added expense. Such neighborhood offices may help the agency to become more aware of the problems of the community.
- 5) The subcommittee supports the agency's idea of extending its activities by providing additional evening hours of service. Even if this can be accomplished only with the sacrifice of some daytime hours, it might still be a matter for serious consideration.
- 6) The subcommittee recognizes that the decision to make more extensive use of group counseling, family counseling, seeing husband and wife together in some situations must be left in the hands of the professional. However, more experimentation in this area is urged in order to both provide more effective service and, possibly, in order to effect some economies.
- 7) With the assistance of the Council of Social Agencies it may be possible to establish one or more multi-function agencies within local communities. Plans for the South Side Project include one such agency. The subcommittee notes with pleasure the open-mindedness and the willingness of the Family Service Bureau to participate in such projects.

C. AGENCY STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATION

It is the firm conviction of the Agency Review Subcommittee that the Family Service Bureau can be significantly strengthened by seeking to effect certain structural changes in its board and committee structure and its administration. On the whole the subcommittee was duly impressed by the competence and devotion of the board members who represented the agency at the agency review meeting. The following suggestions were made with a view toward further strengthening this structure and thereby ultimately helping the agency to more effectively serve its clients:

- 1) The Family Service Bureau is strongly urged to consider an enlargement of the size of its board. It is hoped that such an enlargement may provide for a broader base for participation in and support of the agency. More women, younger persons and a somewhat less homogeneous group may help to bring new ideas to the board. Taking into account the normal level of absenteeism from board meetings, it is felt that an enlarged board will provide for a more adequate forum for discussion and exchange of ideas.

- 2) A system of rotation of board membership would be greatly to the benefit of the agency. The large number of board members of long standing presently serving as leaders of the agency, - although it may have apparent advantages - leads to a danger of inflexibility and inadvertently serves to discourage the development of new talent. The F.S.B. is encouraged to avail itself of the help of the Council's program for the recruitment and training of prospective Board members.
- 3) The subcommittee wishes to encourage the F.S.B. in its plan to develop a membership association. Although the initial financial benefits that are to be derived from such an association may be small, it is felt that such an association may serve as an effective vehicle for interpreting the work of the agency to the community. The committees of the board should be expanded to include membership representation. This device may also serve as an effective method of recruiting new board members and as a source of volunteers for special projects.
- 4) In strengthening its committee structure, the board may well consider the advisability of asking professionals from other agencies and allied fields to serve on its committees.
- 5) It is hoped that there will be representation from the F.S.B. Board in the county and state in Family Service field.
- 6) The Council of Social Agencies has as its prime function, coordinating and planning for social services in the community. In this, it is dependent upon the cooperation of affiliated agencies. This entails participation of agency board and staff people on Council committees. It is particularly noted that F.S.B. has not provided active board representation on the Steering Committee of the Family and Children's Division. While new projects and services on the part of agencies are to be encouraged, for good planning and coordination, the agency should promptly clear with the Council of Social Agencies. A case in point may be found in the proposed narcotics project - an area which has received special attention from the Council for some time.
- 7) As agency review is so closely connected with agency policy, the participation of board with staff in preparing answers to the review questionnaire would help to achieve maximum potential from the process.

III. CONCLUSION

The Family and Children's Agency Review Subcommittee was impressed by the sincerity of the Board and staff in their desire to do an effective job. It is hoped that the agency will broaden its service and strengthen its board in the manner which has been suggested. Providing one of the most vital services in the community, the Family Service Bureau can be assured of the continued interest and concern of the Council of Social Agencies.

The subcommittee requests that six months hence the agency advise what consideration has been given to the suggestions incorporated in this report. At that time, upon suggestions of either the Family Service Bureau or the subcommittee, a follow-up meeting may be in order.

The subcommittee is strongly convinced that the Agency Review procedure has served as an effective method of strengthening the bond of understanding and mutual support between the Family Service Bureau and the Council of Social Agencies. We hope that this relationship will be continually enhanced and strengthened in the months and years that lie ahead.

APPENDIX A

Those attending the conference of Family Service Bureau held March 19, 1964, from 9:30 - 12:00 Noon, at the agency headquarters, 15 Fulton Street, Newark, were:

From the Agency Board

William D. Hardin, President
John F. Geary
Frederick Merdinger
William Osborne, III
Bernard Schein
A. Ned Wilson
Dr. Francis Wood

Staff

Edward Kilduff, Executive
Mrs. Peggy Casey, Casework Supervisor

From the Council of Social Agencies

Gabriel Rich, Chairman of Subcommittee
Herbert P. Woodward, Vice chairman
Mrs. John Cole
Edward T. Plant
Mrs. Ralph N. Shapiro

Staff

Mrs. Jeannette Adams, Coordinator
Agency Review Project
Bert Hunter, Director,
Family and Children's Division
Gilbert Hunsinger, Executive Director
Council of Social Agencies
Shimon Gottschalk, Student,
Field Work

Mr. Arthur T. Carpenter, Chairman
Agency Review Committee
Mrs. Richard N. Berkefeldt, President
Council of Social Agencies

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Needs

June 9
Care Committee